Concordia UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE STUDIES NEWS

Volume 6, no. 4 May, 1991

From the Dean's Desk : M. E. Szabo, Dean of Graduate Studies

A Mind For All Regions

The fabric of Canada is woven across such a wide human and geographical terrain and such a diverse cultural complex of visions, needs, hopes and abilities that one is justifiably amazed that it works at all. In order for such a country to live and develop, the distant regions, whether densely or sparsely populated, must find unique means of communication and cooperation.

A comparable challenge faces Canadian universities. It is frequently the case as wealth forms that it coalesces into a limited number of centres, whether commercial, industrial, technological, educational or otherwise. It seems equally true that in the case of knowledge and the infrastructure requisite to its creation and dissemination large centres of research and expertise develop and attract many of our bright young minds to them. The advantages of such substantial centres is self-evident in a world habituated to "bigger is better": universities with 50, 70 or even 100,000 students, and to phenomena such as the Edmonton Mall - a "shopping centre" so immense that it has become a tourist attraction all by itself.

There are certainly diverse and eclectic considerations which must enter a society's educational structure which should give us pause for thought. Young people clearly constitute the future hope and inspiration of any nation and we should acknowledge that, as an increasing number of them is drawn far from home to universities, their native regions lose a vital and basically irreplaceable human resource. The "brain drain" occurs within countries as well as between them. With the loss of business minds, technically advanced managers, artistic spirits, the intellectually curious and research-oriented youth, it is an uphill struggle for less populated cities and towns to generate new growth and to help accommodate the health and strength of the old ways in an ever changing modern world. Many of the technology-driven discoveries of recent times are in need of human values: values which are embedded in the network of life which makes up the country and values which do not accrue only in large centres. The heritage of a country, vested in all its regions, is akin to the wisdom of the elders and should find its way into our formal educational process.

We certainly do not deny the basic and exciting discoveries which have come from the larger research centres of Canada, and I hope that funding for such research will flourish and will help ensure our national place in the world of tomorrow. We must, however, give more creative thought to the fabric of our national character.

Creativity, excellence and genius have no geographical location. An original idea may be born anywhere at any time. This is true not only of the root of an idea, but also of the location where it flourishes. The soil in which ideas thrive is often in modest locations. In response to such a possibility, concerned academics who have in mind not only the pioneering of knowledge but also the cultivation and evolution of ourselves as a people, should promote the creation of centres of excellence in smaller universities and laboratories of research in quality settings. Placing a highly specialized and singular piece of equipment in the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Wilfrid Laurier in Waterloo or St. Mary's University in Halifax would lure those who need it to universities normally skirted in the grand scheme of academic life in Canada. The right pieces of equipment placed in strategic locations across the country would oblige young scholars to go places and see research work and be exposed to values which they might otherwise overlook. Encouraging talent in all regions of the country and providing settings for innovative research in its assorted expressions is critical for a full nurturing of Canadian research potential and for the succour of the country as a whole. Such sustenance needs to come from decisions at the federal level of government and within the federal level of research and university funding: decisions which should have in mind an image of the country as a whole and not only its grand and more visible centres.

A creative vision is indispensable to a growing nation. Such a vision must look into our future and call upon the divergent strains and individuals to garner their strength for themselves and for the whole. Visions oblige nations to work together, to create knowledge which the future can use and which provide the sustenance the nation's spirit yearns to have.

In response to the standard question. "Can we afford to do all this?," it is my firm belief that the response must be, "We cannot afford not to."

INSIDE

The Diploma in Translation: Meeting the Needs of a Developing Market . . p. 2

The Senior as Student . . . . . p. 3

Upcoming PhD Exams . . . . . p. 4

Concordia's Diploma in Translation: Meeting the Needs of a Developing Market

by Jennifer Keane

Before 1980, Concordia did not have an official Translation Studies Department, but the combination of Canada's Official Languages Act and Quebec's Bill 101 had helped create a new job market for translators. That year, the Departement d'études françaises hired Dr. Judith Woodsworth, a translator by trade, to professionalize the Department of Translation.

Under her direction, the department has thrived. Students can earn a B.A. in Translation Studies, and the graduate diploma program has added two new options — Computer-Assisted Translation and Court Interpreting — to the existing option in Written Translation.

Woodsworth studied at McGill University and the Strasbourg in France, and then returned to McGill to earn her Ph.D. in French Literature. Her doctoral thesis was in comparative literature in which she explored the influence of Edgar Allen Poe on French poets.

She moved to Toronto, where she taught French Language and Literature, and would often be asked by people to translate documents. She applied to the Department of the Secretary of State in Ottawa and, in 1978, was hired as a full-time translator by the Department of National Defense where she translated technical documents until 1980.

Woodsworth responded enthusiastically to the challenge of directing the growth of the Translation Studies Department. "Concordia has been a place that is open to change," she says, "if you want to do things that are different and exciting, people will support you. I've had a lot of encouragement."

One of the first changes that Woodsworth and her colleagues initiated was to introduce a *stage* component, whereby students work for one term as translators. This allows them the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in a business environment and gives them practical experience, as well as the chance to make contacts. Employers evaluate a student's performance in a written report which forms the basis of the student's mark for the course.

The *stage* also gives employers the chance to evaluate a student as a prospective employee. Many students have been subsequently hired by the companies or government offices at which they did their *stage*.

Judith Woodsworth

To enter the graduate diploma program in the Written Translation option, a student should have a bachelor's degree in a field other then translation. "To become a translator, a student must begin with a base of previous knowledge, and learn translation skills," Woodsworth explains. "We have people in our department with backgrounds in law, biology and agriculture, among other areas."

The option in Computer-Assisted Translation requires that students have a B.A. in Translation Studies.

The Computer-Assisted Translation course is taught by M. Claude Bédard , a man with over fifteen years experience in technical and computer-assisted translation. In 1975, Bédard was asked to evaluate Systran (one of the earliest software packages for computer translation). Since then, his interest and skills in computer translation have grown. He now has training on virtually all computer translation systems in the country for the pairing of French-English languages.

"When you begin wondering about machine translation, you simply keep thinking about it all the time," he says. "The more systems I knew, the more people would call on me to consult or evaluate a system." Bédard has travelled around the world to attend conferences, written about different systems, and reads everything he can on them.

Bédard 's course aims to instruct students on the use of computer translation systems, rather than their design. Because enrolment in this program is still quite low, the department has yet to acquire a system to practice on, but Bédard has encouraged students to come and use his own system, demonstrating the theoretical practices which comprise the basis of the course.

"Machine translation is one end of the spectrum that begins with machine assisted translation using on-line dictionaries," he explains, "There are definitely an array of solutions: machine translation, partial machine translation, interactive machine translation. Choosing among them requires knowledge of this variety of solutions and what they bring— what are their strengths and weaknesses, and also what kinds of situations and texts lend themselves more to what degree of automation."

Not all texts are suitable for machine translation; teaching students how to choose appropriate texts is a large aspect of the course. It is part of the step known as pre-editing, which also involves tuning a system's dictionaries to a particular text.

Post-editing is the most crucial step. Not only must a computer's output be checked for accuracy, it must be scrutinized for elements such as idiomatic expressions, context and most importantly, style.

It is because of this kind of interaction that Bédard believes computers cannot replace human translators. "The machine is not threatening anybody right now," he says, "it is a tool only."

Bédard is confident that those with training in computer-assisted translation have a variety of career options. "People could be put in charge of machine translation systems where they are bought, do some consulting, or participate in the development of machine translation. My aim is to give them the hunger to learn more and experiment for themselves, to learn what the machine can do for them and why."

The Court Interpreting option also requires students to have a B.A. in Translation Studies. It is taught by Mr. Michael Humphreys, Coordinator of Court Interpreters for the Province of Québec.

Humphreys was raised in France by English parents. He came to Montréal in 1967 to attend Expo, and stayed. "I decided this was the place for me: two languages, opportunities and open spaces,"

he says with enthusiasm.

He attended Sir George Williams University, and graduated in 1975 with a B.A., Honours in English Literature. He worked as a court interpreter part-time while studying, and became the Chief French-English Interpreter at the Montréal courthouse. The need soon became apparent for a coordinator, and he was offered the position in 1976.

Both the federal and provincial charters of rights guarantees an interpreter although the wording in the federal charter is quite vague: article 14 ensures an interpreter, but does not state whose responsibility it is to provide one. Article 36 of the Chartre Québeçoise is more specific; it justifies an interpreter and a fair trial for the accused, so interpreters are provided if a victim or witness is unable to speak the language of the court. Interpreters are provided free of charge if the accused is being prosecuted by the government and on contract for other cases, such as coroner's inquests.

Court interpreting is a constantly expanding field. There are requests for interpreters in four to five thousand court cases each year in Montréal alone. Humphreys' office provides interpreters for approximately sixty-seven different languages and dialects.

Candidates for the option in Court Interpreting are screened by means of a test and interview, and those with potential for court interpreting are selected. "I haven't had a student yet who couldn't start in the courts at the end of the course." This is because of the screening process, and the strong training that students receive, Humphreys says. In fact, one of last year's graduates has been invited to Ottawa to train for work as a Parliamentary interpreter.

Although court interpreters must also do the written translations of court documents, Humphreys believes that court interpreting and written translation are very different. Court interpreting must be absolutely verbatim. The interpreter cannot vary the register, meaning that he or she must use exactly the same level of language as the person who is speaking, from slang to very sophisticated speech.

"Court interpreters are trained not to vary the registers in any way, whereas translating or interpreting as an art is to render a very stylized form of what is being said in the other language," Humphreys explains.

Court interpreting is also different in the sense that, unlike someone working on a written translation, the interpreter is required to work on the spot. As Humphreys puts it, "Court interpreting is a lot like acting. You're standing up in front of a sometimes packed courtroom, the judge is there in his red robes, so there's that element of coming out in front of an audience."

Junior interpreters, who sit in on trials, undergo a training period to familiarize themselves with the atmosphere and specialized vocabularies (legal, psychiatric, ballistics, etc.) used in the courts. Once they begin their employment, spotchecks are made to evaluate their ability and potential for advancement to intermediate and senior levels.

Instructors who are also professionals, like Humphreys and Bédard, help to keep the department in touch with the job market. Contact is also maintained through the department's connections with professional associations.

Woodsworth is president of A.C.T./C.A.T.S., (L'association canadienne de traductologie/Canadian Association of Translation Studies). The official journal of the association, TTR (Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction), is published at Concordia.

Woodsworth firmly believes in the value of maintaining strong communication with the translating profession, so much so that she did a *stage* of her own a few years ago. The Comité consultatif de la profession, of which she is a member, proposed that teachers undergo practical training similar to the *stage*, an idea which is welcomed by teachers and professional translators. While she was on sabbatical, Woodsworth accepted an offer to work for the Ordre des comptables agréés du Québec for four weeks.

In the article "Climbing Down the Ivory Tower" (published in *Circuit*, a language and communications magazine), Woodsworth recounts the experience as a positive one, albeit stressful."...Along with the obvious problems, comes the added stress of dealing with unfamiliar concepts, never knowing enough and always being corrected... (but) it is always useful for teachers to abandon the lectern and put themselves in a learning situation. It is an exercise in humility and increased effectiveness as a teacher."

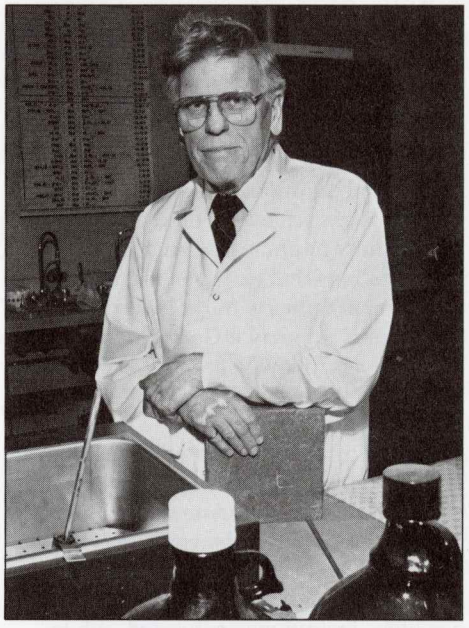
Woodsworth believes that the Translation Department at Concordia will continue to grow, and hopes to implement a Master's program in Translation in the near future. She sees a Master's program as having a dual function: helping to give people more training in their field, and providing opportunities for research in translation. "Faculty members do research anyway, but it's helpful if students are also doing research, because as you supervise a student's work you get more incentive and stimulation for your own," she states.

Although Woodsworth enjoys all facets of her work, she says that the single most rewarding aspect of the job is the contact with students — watching them progress and becoming good translators. "It's so varied," she says. "It's never just administration, or research, or teaching — I can alter the variables when I need to. This is a real privilege that we have at the university level. I feel very lucky."

Dr. Judith Woodsworth and a colleague at the University of Ottawa are presently working on a history of translation in the world, a project they hope to complete in six years' time.

The Senior as Student

by D.W. Hawes



Douglas Hawes

Much has been written about retirement, the golden years and how to occupy oneself during this period. I believe that some of the uncertainty of planning for this time of one's life centers around the meaning of the word "retirement." Perhaps it is time to consider an alternative expression which, rather than implying something akin to the proverbial rocking chair, leads one to consider a more productive activity. This may or may not involve

Continued on page 4

a change of one's calling but will, most probably, entail changes of direction and pace.

Many years ago in China when a person of means reached retirement age he would pass many of his duties and responsibilities over to others so he could devote the necessary time to the creation of something of artistic or literary worth which would constitute his personal legacy to society. Usually, but not always, this activity would be directed towards the achievement of some goal not related to his prior occupation. In many instances, the wives of such men would also have the opportunity to undertake such tasks, usually somewhat earlier in life, after their matriarchal duties were, at least partially, diminished. In prewar Germany, a similar practice was followed and this occupation was given the term "life's work" which signified the importance attached to the performance of an activity in which a person has long cherished a desire to engage.

Today, we are fortunate in that the opportunity for such endeavours is available to a broad segment of society and this is certainly the case in those areas in which academic insitutions are located. While activities of this nature need not be carried out in connection with a university, the guidance, facilities and environment of such establishments offer many attractive advantages and, in many cases, an essential infrastructure, particularly in the sciences.

Exchanging expertise

There is no reason why persons over the age of 65 cannot be instructed and encouraged to express themselves with blithesome spirit to fill the need for good Canadian poetry, art and music or, from the vantage point of long experience, to write a compelling novel that rings with the joys, sorrows and humour of life. Alternatively, one can seek to make a contribution to the great body of scientific kowledge from which we all benefit. There is also no reason why this cannot be an exhilarating experience as well.

Most seniors have developed a reasonable appreciation of the value of time and money. As a result, those considering an academic pursuit are certainly conscious of the fact that such an undertaking must be productive to justify using the services of the university and its staff. In addition, senior students are obviously mindful of the fact that the principal function of a university is to train the minds and hearts of young people entering the various fields of endeavour for which such preparation is mandatory. It follows, therefore, that the instruction of seniors who have a shorter career expectancy, must not impede the prime function of the institution. It has been my experience that, with a litte discretion, this can be easily achieved.

The senior student is also in a unique position to actually assist the academic process because he or she will naturally have more time available to participate in some of the processes which are auxiliary to lecturing. This is particularly the case in respect to research, the preparation of models or demonstrations as well as the writing of papers. Here, the luxury of a little more freedom can make a great deal of difference, not only to the perception of the nature of the task itself but to the manner in which it may be performed as well.

In my case, the transition to being a senior student was a natural process. I graduated from McGill in 1950 in Electrical Engineering and, since that time, have practiced principally in the industrial and utilities field as a partner or employee in consulting firms. Along the way I took a master's degree in engineering at Ecole Polytechnique. During all of this time, I was continually impressed with the incredible amount of research, experience and inspiration which had gone into the preparation of the great body of knowledge available to the engineering profession. Design, development, construction and operation are all facets of engineering which interested me greatly but, as I approached retirement age, the possibility of undertaking a full-time career in research began to hold an increasing attraction for me.

By great good fortune, at this time I was given the opportunity to work at the Centre for Building Studies as a research consultant. In this function I managed a number of research projects and this led to a strong desire to participate more actively in the technical aspects of the work. This culminated by enrolment in the Ph.D. program in January 1988.

This entailed research in the development of latent heat storage in concrete building materials. The storage of energy is a field in which I have long been interested, so the successful culmination of the work this year was a source of great personal satisfaction. This fact and the remarkable degree of enouragement and assistance which I received, rendered the whole process a truly enjoyable experience.

Douglas Hawes is a recent graduate in the Ph.D. program in Building Engineering. His doctoral thesis was entitled "Latent Heat Storage in Concrete." He is presently a Research Associate in the Centre for Building Studies .

Upcoming Doctoral Examinations

LACASSE, Michael
Building Engineering
Date: May 10, 1991 at 10:00 a.m.
Location: BE-242
Title: *Functional Properties of Polyurethane Based Sealants Blended with Polymeric Modifiers*

RABBANI-FARNI, Naser
Civil Engineering
Date: May 16, 1991 at 10:00 a.m.
Location: H-769
Title: *Prestressed Steel Continuous Span Box Girders*

GLASS, Richard
Administration
Date: May 28,1991 at 2:00 p.m.
Location: H-762
Title: *Opening up the Black Box: A Multi-Method Investigation of Expert-Novice Differences for a Software Diagnosis Task with Implications for DSS Research and Design*

The examinations for the above students will take place in the Hall Building, 1455 de Maisonneuve W. Montréal, except for M. Lacasse's exam which will take place at 1257 Guy.

Editorial Committee :
Chair: M. E. Szabo
Editor: D. MacFadden
Editorial Asst.: A-M. Laurin
Photographer: C. Bélanger
Printing: Concordia Printing Services
Published by:
The Division of Graduate Studies
Mailing Address:
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8
Location: *2145 Mackay Street*
Telephone: *(514) 848-3800*
Fax Number: *(514) 848-2812*